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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001798

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, S/CT, DRL; NSC FOR E. MILLARD

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10-16-13

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: Tigers widely blamed in killings of six more Tamils

Refs: Colombo 1789, and previous

(U) Classified by James F. Entwistle, Deputy Chief of Mission. Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Six more Tamils have been killed in separate incidents in the past three weeks. As with the roughly 40 similar incidents in past months, the Tigers have been widely blamed for the latest slew of killings, with some observers contending that the group is trying to wipe out perceived opponents in the north/east. The continued killings have not raised too many hackles in the south, perhaps because the violence has been Tamil-on-Tamil. END SUMMARY.

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Six More Killings  
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2. (SBU) Six more Tamils have been killed in separate incidents in the past three weeks. All of the incidents took place in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province. Details of the six killings follow:

-- On October 8, Charles Edward, 30, who was reportedly a former member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), was shot dead in Trincomalee District.

-- On October 5, Subramaniam Kirubakaran, 36, who was reportedly a member of an anti-LTTE political party, was shot dead near Batticaloa town.

-- On October 3, Eramba Moorthy Sabanyagam, an alleged military informant, was shot dead near Batticaloa town.

-- On October 2, Vigneswaran (one name only), an alleged military informant, was shot dead near Trincomalee town.

-- On September 28, the recently severed head of S. Sundararajah, 33, was found near Akkaraipattu town in Ampara District. Sundararajah was reportedly a former member of the LTTE.

-- On September 26, V. Yogendran, 39, who was reportedly a former member of an anti-LTTE party, was shot dead near Batticaloa town.

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Tigers are Blamed  
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3. (C) As with the roughly 40 similar incidents in past months (see Reftels), the Tigers have been widely blamed for the latest slew of killings. In making this assessment, observers have noted that all of the victims had apparently run afoul of the LTTE in some way, e.g.: by once being members of the organization and then leaving (the LTTE does not allow this); by being associated with anti-LTTE parties; or by being an alleged military informant. The killings also fit into the LTTE's long-time modus operandi for assassinations which involves "pistol gangs" shooting victims up close. As has been the case with the earlier killings, however, the LTTE has not taken responsibility for the incidents and no one has been arrested as of yet.

4. (C) When queried about the killings, Douglas Devananda, a MP and leader of the anti-LTTE Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), told polchief on October 15 that there was no question in his mind that the Tigers were the responsible party. As evidence, Devananda commented that members of his party have received threatening messages from the LTTE to cease-and-desist their activities. When they have not, they have wound up dead. Devananda noted that the LTTE has been careful to avoid any direct connection with the violence, but that there was no doubt in his mind that the group was culpable.

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An Orchestrated Campaign in the North/East?  
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15. (C) In analyzing the many killings, some observers contend that the LTTE is trying to wipe out its perceived opponents in the north/east. Kethesh Loganathan, an analyst at the Center for Policy Alternatives, a local think-tank, told polchief on October 16 that he thought the LTTE was trying to rid the region of potential opponents ahead of a possible agreement with the GSL on an interim arrangement in the north/east. With opponents in the Tamil community out of the way, the LTTE can more easily argue that it is the "sole representative of the Tamil people" and deserves to be in sole control of a north/east setup. Beyond this larger plan, Loganathan added that he thought there was also a fair amount of score settling going on, with LTTE elements killing Tamils who have refused to bend to the group's will in some way.

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COMMENT  
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16. (C) The international community and human rights activists have recoiled at the killings, expressing deep concern that the Tigers are not changing their stripes despite the peace process. Interestingly, however, the killings have not raised too many hackles in the south. This could be attributed to the fact that the violence that has taken place is almost overwhelmingly Tamil-on-Tamil and does not directly involve the Sinhalese majority. Most of the violence is also taking place in the north and east, far away from southern population centers. There would certainly be much more of an outcry if Sinhalese were routinely being gunned down in downtown Colombo. END COMMENT.

17. (U) Minimize considered.

Lunstead